July 16, 2021

Occult Interests and Theosophy in Germany (1880s-1930s): Blavatsky vs. Hitler, List and Liebenfels on Race

FASCISM, THEOSOPHY

SUMMARY

Most importantly, without recognizing the Theosophy of 19th century as a system and as it was being explained, thereby respecting the teachers and school it was being explained from versus modified, simplified or distorted systems *derived from it*, rather than the defenses of so-called orthodox 'Blavatskyian Theosophists', demarcating the difference between Theosophy and Fascism, Nazism and Ariosophy wouldn't be possible. The integrity of the system must be defended, as being able to do so prevents *false* charges that Theosophy contributes to the foundations of these ideologies.

INTRODUCTION

Studies into 17th-19th century 'Traditional Theosophy' are still developing in the Academies and under scholars, and there has been some reignited interest in the ideological content of the system propagated by H.P. Blavatsky. This system is referred to as '*trans*-Himalayan esotericism.' However, we must still contend that this system, identified with a pan-esotericism (generically titled the Wisdom-Religion or 'Theosophy') did not influence Antisemitism, Adolf Hitler, National Socialism and Fascism. However, there is a relation between Blavatsky's 'Theosophy,' and occult, or spiritualist interests in Austria and Germany involving the 'Ariosophy' of Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels.

The wording is important. It must not be construed as to argue, that (1) Theosophical notions are responsible for Hitler's racial ideology, or Ariosophy, if the teachings and notions of Blavatsky and her sponsors' writings negate nor compares to Ariosophy and National Socialism, even in the use of particular terminology; and (2) neither is there a need for "Traditional Theosophers" to feel the urge to reject Blavatsky in Guénonian's manner to save their reputation from its connection with the Theosophical Movement Theosophists, they term "Blavatskian Theosophy."

Lanz von Liebenfels wrote in 1932, that Hitler was a pupil of the Ariosophists. Austrian psychologist, Wilfried Daim (1923-2016) writes in *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab: Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels* (pp. 20-21 and 120-21) that Liebenfels claims he had direct contact with H.P. Blavatsky at one point, and personal contact with Hitler when he visited him in 1909 to obtain some back issues of the *Ostara* (magazine).

It is not known if he met H.P. Blavatsky, but it is true that *a very few* German Theosophists were unfortunately sympathetic to the cause of the Nazis and Fascists, who later policed and oppressed Theosophists, Masons, and every other non-compliant German occult order.

H.P. Blavatsky did not merely invent or construct 'Theosophy,' and ideas concerning the multifold meanings of ancient symbols, such as the sevenfold meaning of the SWASTIKA. So, it is highly inaccurate and troublesome to define the Theosophical Movement in a way that lets the history and actions of the Nazis define the former's symbolism and narrative, because that affects people's psychological reactions, and has closed them off from contrary information that can be of great help to their knowledge. This ignorance conditions in people negative psychological associations of the Jains, of East Asian cultures and people, and of Buddhism. The swastika is part of the language of symbolism in the history of the institutions of the Mysteries, as well as having been used and known to many cultures long before the Nazis adapted it.

The case is no different from the use of the FASCES in American symbolism as on the wall of the U.S. Senate Chamber, in old American Magazines and in U.S. Capitol architecture. Scholars often speak of THEOSOPHY as if (1) it all depends on H.P. Blavatsky; (2) is merely an invention or construction of Blavatsky's hyper-imagination; or (3) as if Theosophists do not even exist to no longer defend it, or her (*i.e.*, ignoring Theosophists when they do).

A few, including leading Theosophists of the present-day disregard inarguable defenses involving differences between Blavatsky's discourse and system of esoteric philosophy from that of Charles W. Leadbeater, Alice Bailey, Annie Besant among others and what H.P.B. herself coined properly, "Pseudo-Theosophy" (*e.g.*, 'Christo-Theosophical' offshoots). They hence discount the very idea of a "Pseudo" or "distorted Theosophy" as the discourse of "orthodox," even "dogmatic Theosophists." In the aim to seek scholarly legitimacy or play the middle, they are confronted with this dilemma.

Most importantly, without recognizing the Theosophy of 19th century as a system and as it was being explained, thereby respecting the teachers and school it was being explained from versus modified, simplified or distorted systems *derived from it*, rather than the defenses of so-called orthodox 'Blavatskyian Theosophists', demarcating

the difference between Theosophy and Fascism, Nazism and Ariosophy wouldn't be possible. The integrity of the system must be defended ("I Dread the Appearance in Print of Our Philosophy," The Mahatma Letter No. 56), as being able to do so prevents *false* charges that Theosophy contributes to the foundations of these ideologies.

It is vital to address the point *strongly and authoritatively*, because Theosophy essentially negates Fascism, Nazism and Third Positionism. Another refutation is that the Fascists and Nazis *did not recognize* Theosophy as the source of their beliefs and racial notions. This is carefully dissected in *Post-Risorgimento Idealism: Historical Context of Giovanni Gentile's Fascism, Mazzini and Carbonari Theosophists)*, and obvious in *Theosophy in Italy and Under Fascist Rule | The Prefect of Genoa Report (1939)*.

If it is doubted what is stated, take this into account when I had written that the philosophy taught to the Theosophists *does not belong to them*, but to the men who were teachers to H.P.B. There has been much disrespectful misrepresentation and abuse of that philosophy, which has devalued perception of it.

K.H. said, "*I dread the appearance in print of our philosophy."* Morya explains affectionately in his letter that K.H. asks of him, "Will you watch over my work, *will you see it falls not into ruins*?" Morya reminiscing — states: "*I promised*. What is there I would not have promised him..."

There are researchers, that tend to methodologically revert to *overused* (keyword) academic rhetoric familiar in that of deconstructionism, where everything is the construction of a construction of a construction, and the subject of that study is made to seem as if it has no value, essence, or relation to *anything*, except mental abstract concepts, rather than realities related to nature. The method gives the allusion, that there's a direct connection between Theosophy and the racial *völkisch* ideology espoused by Adolf Hitler, other '*anti*-Jewish' Germans and German occultists of the time. This pattern *is not* indicative of factual research, but opinionated arguments, hypothesis, conjecture, or sometimes intentional dishonesty and conspiracy *under the guise of scholarship*.

Theosophy and Theosophists *still* exist, some independently or in disagreement with the operations and choices of the present-day Theosophical Society; and others as due-paying members and board members of one of the four Theosophical branches.

Theosophy for Blavatsky aimed to put (1) high ethics; (2) knowledge of nature's secrets; and (3) "universal brotherhood" into practice. The latter refers to hopes of international peace and the cooperation of nations, and the dependency of life within the human economy and grand ecosystem.

This is rooted in the concept of *dependent origination* or *pratītyasamutpāda*, more than as some suggest is *derived from Blavatsky interaction with socialist rhetoric*, or a scheme to propagate Communism, which is a lie. Theosophy: (1) is related to Neo-Platonic, Central and South Asian roots; (2) considered to be transcendental psychology and divine inspiration; (3) is the theory of an ancient 'Wisdom-Religion' or 'secret doctrine' (ancient universal pan-esotericism); and (4) argues, that an original ancient occultism (or magic) is the true source of spiritualism.

Keywords: *Theosophy, Blavatsky, Hitler, National Socialism, Race, Thule, Liebenfels, Guido von List, German Occultism*

THE ISSUE OF THEOSOPHY, OCCULTISM, AND NATIONALISM SOCIALISM IN GERMANY (1880-1930)

The regularly cited main sources of influence on Adolf Hitler and German National Socialism refer to Richard Wagner, the philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer, the Viennese politicians George von Schonerer and Karl Lueger, Joseph Arthur Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, nationalism, Social Darwinism, regional occult influences, Blavatsky and Theosophy, and racism. The organization of the Theosophical Society in Germany and the very nature of the German theosophical organization, including the position of Rudolf Steiner around the beginning of the twentieth-century was very complicated.

OCCULT FAD IN GERMANY

Cornelius Tabori wrote in his diary about occultism in Germany:

> "Germany seems to be gripped by an occult fever. Its victims are like drug-addicts; every new psychic fashion claims thousands of adherents and dozens of victims....Men and women have become exhausted by the sorrows and horrors of reality; they flee to the world of imagination; the maze of everyday life enfolds them and they hope to find a way out through occultism and dreams." My Occult Diary (London, 1951), p. 53.

The belief of the National Socialist was fundamentally rooted in notions on the nature of the blood, albeit modified in theory to work in tangent with ethnic and racial notions of the time-period, as Edouard Calic details in his *Secret Conversations with Hitler* (New York, ed. 1971, p. 68). In this 1931 interview with a Leipzig newspaper editor, Adolf Hitler declared with passion on the National Socialist movement, that it judged people by the spiritual force those people were only capable of putting forth. This "historic mission" Hitler said, was a "spiritual cause" requiring unique spiritual fighters to create and maintain a thousand-year Reich. It can be surmised, that the climate of occultism in Hitler's formative years did have an impact on him.

LIEBENFELS INTERNATIONAL ARIO-CHRISTIAN COALITION

Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels was certain however:

> "One day in August 1909 a young man dropped by the Vienna office of the Austrian occultist, Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels. Pale and shabby in appearance, the man politely introduced himself and asked whether he might order some back issues of Lanz's self-published periodical, Ostara. Lanz's Ostara was dedicated to propagating an esoteric doctrine, known as Ariosophy, which prophesied the resurgence of a lost Aryan civilisation peopled by a Nordic 'God Men.' Touched by his visitor's sympathetic appearance and earnest demeanor, Lanz offered the young man some copies of Ostara free of charge and two crowns for the street car home. The visitor, according to Lanz's 1951 memoir, was Adolf Hitler." (Eric Kurlander, Hitler's Obsession with the Occult, June 30, 2017, retrieved from https://yalebooksblog.co.uk/2017/06/30/hitler-obsession-occult-kurlander/)

Lanz von Liebenfels in 1925 wrote, that "already *there appear the outlines of a new Ariosophical, Ario-Christian International*: Fascism in Italy, Awakening Hungary, the Spanish Fascists, the North American Ku Klux Man and finally the Swastika movement in Germany, directly proceeding from Ariosophy" (Daim, 23).

Ariosophists, with their notions of the *purity of the blood*, believed that the Aryans (they fancied as themselves) were dying-off. The mightiest counterpart of the Aryan is the Jew, *Mein Kampf* reads (Hitler, 300). Jews are not a counterpart, foe, or enemy of the Theosophists, nor has any Theosophist ever written such an idea.

H.P. Blavatsky tried to explain the history and use of monotheism as a tool, arguing that none of the three Abrahamic religions were the "True Religion," which Christianity and Islam competes against Judaism for. Besides this, H.P. Blavatsky and the Theosophists never express a hatred of Jews like Hitler, when he considered the Jews to be "lower races" and "beasts." Theosophists did not believe Aryans were "Nordic God Men" and definitely did not believe the Jews were Satanic beasts.

Blavatsky wrote to great extents about the content and origins of the Jewish Kabbalah and the history of monotheism. She arouses suspicion and charges of racism and antisemitism however, when she adds in a footnote to this commentary, that 'Mankind is evidently divided into *god-informed men* and *lower human creatures*.'

> "The intellectual difference between the Aryan and other civilized nations and such savages as the South Sea Islanders, is inexplicable on any other grounds. No amount of culture, nor generations of training amid civilization, could raise such human specimens as the Bushmen, the Veddhas of Ceylon, and some African tribes, to the same intellectual level as the Aryans, the Semites, and the Turanians so called. The "sacred spark" is missing in them and it is they who are the only inferior races on the globe, now happily — owing to the wise adjustment of nature which ever works in that direction — fast dying out. *Verily mankind is "of one blood," but not of the same essence*. We are the hot-house, artificially quickened plants in nature, having in us a spark, which in them is latent."

She contradicts herself when she wrote:

> "Verily mankind is "of one blood," but not of the same essence."

Which lends support to traditional racist ideas, but this is one line, in comparison to the many other times she wrote the opposite. Perhaps, another word was meant, since she says the opposite in the very same work affirming the oneness of all life, or else she would not have written this in her Key to Theosophy:

> "(a) All men have spiritually and physically the same origin, which is the fundamental teaching of Theosophy. (b) As mankind is essentially of one and the same essence, and that essence is one — infinite, uncreate, and eternal, whether we call it God or Nature — nothing, therefore, can affect one nation or one man without affecting all other nations and all other men. This is as certain and as obvious as that a stone thrown into a pond will, sooner or later, set in motion every single drop of water therein. (The Key to Theosophy, p. 41)

When she says, "We [the 'Aryan root-race' or epoch] are the hot-house..." what does she mean by Aryan, and what people comprises this root-epoch? The concept she is using is not the same as in the ideas of the Germans mentioned throughout.

Blavatsky's teacher, K.H. in a letter writes that, "the fifth race — ours — began in Asia a million years ago." He refers to the "white conquerors" as the last sub-race of the fifth, and the highest in physical intellectuality[†]; and the "Aryan-Asiatics," or Indian civilization, to which he belongs, as being most developed in spirituality. They also explain, that India is sleeping, and the people's spirituality has declined, or *is being suffocated*.

[†] Physical intellectuality, or technological development representative of the civilization, although the technological development of Western Europe and the United States is not completely the achievement of the "white conquerors."

The doctrine of cycles is a process in the human economy as well, regarding the rise and decline of civilizations, of "Family Races" and "sub-races" in the vocabulary is employed in this system to describe national and racial cycles. The classification, *sub-race* does not refer to "inferior races."

Regarding inferior races as demonstrated, it is Blavatsky herself who writes in that footnote, that a certain portion of humanity are *inferior races*, dying out, which to her detriment led to charges of racism. Humanity, she writes is on its descending arc of its cycle, and the fifth root-race, which is dominated by the "white conquerors" is crossing the apex of its evolution, and as it descends, gradually, a new human will begin to come.

> "...men of the new coming (the 6th) race are beginning to drop in occasionally."
>
> BLAVATSKY, PREMATURE AND PHENOMENAL GROWTHS, COLLECTED WRITINGS, VOL VI, 116.

Then she adds, that according to an old prophecy, this Fifth Root-Race *will actually become gradually darker*, and children considered monstrosities may however be the first signs, or pioneers of a "new type." Despite her theories, the German Nazis with their *Lebensborn* project would have abhorred such a prospect:

> "*Such children regarded in our days by official science as exceptional monstrosities, are simply the pioneers of that race*. There is a prophecy in certain Asiatic old books couched in the following terms, the sense of which we may make clearer by adding to it a few words in brackets. "And as the fourth (race) was composed of Red-yellow which faded into Brown-white (bodies), so *the fifth will fade out into white-brown (the white races becoming gradually darker*)."

THINGS BLAVATSKY SAID THAT CONFUSES RESEARCHERS BUT CONTRADICTS RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

1. The Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* is "the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul."
2. Blavatsky, out of all her writings in one footnote asserts, that the Turanians (ancestors of the Turkic people), a few African tribes, Bushmen (or San people), and Veddhas, basically certain tribal people, are not capable, or likely to raise the whole of their peoples to the current intellectuality of the Fifth Root-Race (a category that includes Africans and "Semites").
3. The Semites and Arabs are Aryans. Africans, Semites, etc., are considered part of the same humanity and belong to the Fifth Root-Race — a belief in direct contradiction to *antisemitism* and the Ariosophist-Nazi racial theories of Liebenfels, List, Streicher, and Hitler.
4. The "white conquerors" (a sub-race within the general Fifth Root-Race) will descend as rapidly as their ascent. Humanity, she asserts, has been decreasing, but she says *in general*, in physical and moral excellence.
5. Predicts a figure likened to Adolf Hitler, and pleads toward the end of her life, that we ought to practice "universal brotherhood."

> "As every sub-race and nation have their cycles and stages of developmental evolution repeated on a smaller scale, it must be the more so in the case of a Root-Race. Our race then has, as a Root-race, crossed the equatorial line and is cycling onward on the Spiritual side; but *some of our sub-races still find themselves on the shadowy descending arc of their respective national cycles*..."

The term *sub-race* does not refer to the racial concept, nor to inferior, or lower people. The concept of world cycles is ancient, and not based in racism. To believe so would be to ignore human history. Tribes, nations, and civilizations do indeed fade. Peoples (races) can die-out.

Since, it is further mentioned, that the ancestors of the ancient Greeks and Romans had an evanescent cycle of fame and glory, then Blavatsky must be racist or prejudiced towards Europeans too? Yet, no one says this.

ARYANS AND SEMITES, AND BLAVATSKY REFUTATION OF SCIENTIFIC RACISM

There is desire to portray H.P. Blavatsky's entire legacy and writing career as merely a racist of the colonial mind, and an antisemite, based on the same two to three quotations used here. There is a difference Blavatsky's master, K.H. reminds us, that is drawn between spiritual and material (*i.e.*, technologically) developed civilizations, which is that a people's high intellect does not equal high spirituality.

The fate of certain continents of the fifth Root-Race is to be, they say, destruction through natural cataclysms by volcanoes and water. The degree of physical intellectuality of a civilization runs apace with the amount of evil it produces, according to K.H. on the destruction of civilizations. Morya had remarked in another letter this difference, that the intellectual development of a civilization is not the same as its spiritual development. So, they are surely not praising any people, and certainly not in the Fascist sense (see *The Snub-Nosed Saxons, Borderland Magazine 1894*).

Blavatsky and the Ariosophists do use similar terms, like many other offshoots. Hence, if one were to quote Blavatsky when she writes, that 'the Semites, especially the Arabs, are later Aryans — degenerate in spirituality and perfected in materiality,' one is at liberty still to disagree with her and hold her accountable. The same can be said when Blavatsky asserts, that 'no amount of training could raise the Bushmen, the Veddhas, and some African tribes to the same intellectual level as the Aryans, the Semites (Jews), and the "Turanians."' This is speaking of them in a racially biased way, and one is free to mention that.

Blavatsky states, that the Jews, the Semites and Arabs *all* belong to the Fifth Root-Race, and that *there is no division between the Semite and the Aryan*. "The Aryan and their Semitic Branch are of the Fifth Race [Epoch]," she says in this work. "We must remember in this connection, that the peoples of Southwestern and Western Asia, including the Medes, were all Aryans. It is yet far from being proved who were the original and primitive masters of India" (*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. 2, p. 361). "The occult doctrine *admits of no such divisions as the Aryan and the Semite*." All the peoples of the fifth root-race range from dark-skinned color ("...pre-Vedic India...was a colony of the dark-skinned Aryans...", see *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. 2, p. 361) "to the creamiest white."

Blavatsky asserts, that "the reason for division of humankind into higher and lower races is obsolete and an erroneous belief" (Blavatsky, Vol. II, Commentary Stanza IX).

Likewise, as in her views on affording education to all and equal rights: "There are really no "inferior races," or low-grade races for all are one in our common humanity; and as we have all had incarnations in each of these races, we ought to be more brotherly to them" (Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, Vol. 8).

Two theories are presented in the following passage, that Blavatsky puts forth. The main theory is opposed by "white supremacists" and "ethno-nationalists," and the other theory here is a geological theory of submerged,

rising and falling continents and islands, abandoned by geologists:

> "The Africans have never left their continent for several hundred thousands of years. If to-morrow the continent of Europe were to disappear and other lands to re-emerge instead; and *if the African tribes were to separate and scatter on the face of the earth, it is they who, in about a hundred thousand years hence, would form the bulk of the civilized nations*. And it is the descendants of those of our highly cultured nations,who might have survived on some one island, without any means of crossing the new seas, that would fall back into a state of relative savagery. *Thus the reason given for dividing humanity into superior and inferior races falls to the ground and becomes a fallacy*..."

In *The Secret Doctrine*'s theory of human evolution based on commentaries of the *Book of Dzyan*, mankind and civilizations have been periodically destroyed through cataclysms. The objects of civilized portions of humanity that inhabited regions in their earlier conditions, K.H. asserts, have been pulverized by moving glaciers, pushing the survivors into a primitive state, and leaving behind "only such rude implements as now found among those savage tribes" geologists and archaeologists come upon.

They are not mocking tribal peoples, except merely explaining the cyclical destruction of civilizations, which they claimed will surely also become the fate of America and Europe (Blavatsky on Indigenous People in The Secret Doctrine). Blavatsky calls this fate of America and Europe, their "racial karma."

This was shown in a 1882 letter, when K.H. states to A.P. Sinnett:

> "Remember, you belong to the fifth Race, yet you are but a Western *sub*-race. Notwithstanding your efforts, what you call civilization is confined only to the latter and its offshoots in America. Radiating around, its deceptive light may seem to throw its rays on a greater distance than it does in reality. (...) *A student of occultism ought not to speak of the "stagnant condition of the fourth Race people"* since *history* knows next to nothing of that condition "up to the beginning of modern progress" of other nations but the Western. What do you know of America, for instance, before the invasion of that country by the Spaniards? Less than two centuries prior to the arrival of Cortez there was as great a "rush" towards progress among the *sub-races* of Peru and Mexico as there is now in Europe and the U.S.A. *Their sub-race ended in nearly total annihilation through causes generated by itself; so will yours at the end of its cycle*." (MAHATMA LETTER NO. 23b, 1882)

Another part Blavatsky gets in trouble is a passage about the "sacred spark," where H.P.B. wrote in the mentioned footnote, that the divine spark is *latent* in the Bushmen, the Veddhas, "some African tribes" and aboriginals. However, we find in *The Mahatma Letters*, K.H. defending "negroes" and condemning any Theosophist as "not a brother," or fit to learn their philosophy if he holds the views of that time on the "negro."

INFLUENCE OF ARIOSOPHY ON HITLER'S RACIAL VIEWS

The analogy of Blavatsky's language being related to or an arguable influence on the Ariosophists is brought up by scholars when Adolf Hitler states, that:

> "...the two types [of humans] will rapidly diverse from one another. One will sink to a *sub-human race* and the other rise far above the man of today. *I might call the two varieties the god-man and the mass-animal*."

And the similarity and issue with Blavatsky is when she wrote in the SD:

> 'Mankind is evidently divided into *god-informed men* and *lower human creatures*.'

To go more in-depth though, Adolf Hitler espouses the Listian and Rudolf von Sebotendorff's (founder of the Thule Society) racial dualism of the Aryan-German against the Jew, demonstrating that the influence through which the idea reached him *cannot* be H.P.B. Rausching demonstrates, that Adolf Hitler used the *Ostara's* Theozoology of Liebenfels conception of the "root-race" to refer to the Jews, whom the latter taught to be the descendants of the apes through sodomy.

> "He [the Jew] must have come from another root of the human race."
>
> ADOLF HITLER INTERVIEW WITH HERMAN RAUSCHING

The difference between Blavatsky's explanations and Adolf Hitler's racial dualism directly contradict each other, and are further made clear when Herman Rausching claims that Hitler in conversation said that:

> "Two worlds face one another—the men of God and the men of Satan. The Jew is the anti-man, the creature of another god. He must have come from another root of the human race. I set the Aryan and the Jew over against each other; and if I call one of them a human being I must call the other something else. The two are as widely separated as man and beast. Not that I would call the Jew a beast. He is much further from the beasts than we Aryans. He is a creature outside nature and alien to nature."

To any person, the *root-race* concept — which was not invented by Blavatsky but can be shown in the Chinese Shu-King, Japanese and Guatemalan lore, Zoroastrian and Buddhist texts (see The Four Modes of Birth in The Secret Doctrine and the Abhidharmakosa of Buddhism) — appears mythical, complicated and absurdly fantastical. Sure. However, no Theosophist has *ever* argued anything Hitler is saying in his supposed interview with Rausching.

This *view on the Jews isn't related to Blavatsky's statements at all*, such as (1) Lanz von Liebenfel's Ario-Christian beliefs of the hell awaiting those who race-mix; and (2) Hitler's justifications for genocide provided through their ideas on maintaining the "purity of the blood," which is not a theosophical idea. Books like David Luhrssen's *Hammer of the Gods: The Thule Society and the Birth of Nazism*, and others like it dangerously mislead the public.

The references to "Aryan" as a term in Theosophical literature refers to (1) the self-designation of a set of ethnic groups of Iranian, Indic and Nuristani peoples; (2) the Rishi-yogins or *arya* meaning "noble"; and (3) Āryāvarta, meaning the "abode of the Indo-Aryan or Indic peoples" supporting the theory of a multidirectional migration of a central Asian people, now known as "Indo-Europeans" into much of India and Europe c. 2000 and 1500 B.C.E. Blavatsky specifically states that the epochal reference to the *Aryan* refers to the ancient historical influence of Iran, the Indo-Europeans and their descendants. This is considered within the larger context of the doctrine of *cosmic* and *world cycles*.

Ancient India, which included Tibet is described as the "Alma-Mater" of the Mysteries, *not Austria-Hungary and Germany*. Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler knew of this lore, since they sent the SS on a diplomatic and quasi-scientific Nazi expedition led by Ernst Schäfer to search for the last of the original Aryan tribes. Their idea of Tibet, like many Europeans was unrealistic. Ernst Schäfer was disillusioned, and claimed there existed many homosexual practices in the population, and between boys and Lamas:

> "In Germany the idea of an Aryan or "master" race found resonance with rabid nationalism, the idea of the German superman distilled from the philosophy of Frederick Nietzsche, and Wagner's operatic celebrations of Nordic sagas and Teutonic mythology." (Alex McKay, *Hitler and the Himalayas: The SS Mission to Tibet 1938-39*, Spring 2001, retrieved from https://tricycle.org/magazine/hitler-and-himalayas-ss-mission-tibet-1938-39/)

The second object of the Theosophical Society used to include "the investigation of Aryan literature, religion, and science" (William Q. Judge, *The Path*, Feb, 1891), and now the very use of this term "Aryan" arouses the idea of a direct connection between Theosophists and the National Socialist movement. The people are constantly being cut off from knowledge.

HITLER'S OCCULT CURIOSITIES AND THE THULE CONTRIBUTION TO FOUNDING THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST GERMAN WORKER'S PARTY

In the contentious work of Herman Rauschning, *Hitler in conversation mentions his knowledge of a Munich occultist* who had written about the "Cyclopean eye." George Mosse first identified the "Munich savant" as Edgar Dacque. In Theosophical circles, the Cyclopean eye in Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (p. 307), asserts that an earlier form of mankind was once physically endowed with a "third eye," possessing psychic functions, that existed in the back of the head (not the front), but became atrophied into the pineal gland. This is known as the "Eye of Shiva" in Vedic esotericism and Theosophy. In Tibetan Buddhism, it is known as the "Eye of Dangma" or Dangma's opened eye.

> "As our London opponent truly remarks: these subjects (metaphysical) are only partly for understanding. A higher faculty belonging to the higher life must see, — and it is truly impossible to force it upon one's understanding — merely in words. One must see with his spiritual eye, hear with his *Dharmakayic* ear, feel with the sensations of his *Ashta-vijnyana* (spiritual 'I') before he can comprehend this doctrine fully; otherwise it may but increase one's 'discomfort,' and add to his knowledge very little." (*The Mahatma Letters*, no. 25)

The Thule and Ariosophists can be understood to be adopting ideas circling around the time, whereas Blavatsky having *nothing* personally to do with the Thule and Ariosophists, nor a connection to their mission has her own objective, as an agent of the order of the clandestine fraternity her teachers belonged. This mission is entirely counter to the agendas of the Thule, Edda Society, SS, and Ariosophists.

Rauschning writes on the Cyclopean eye in reference to the savant and Hitler, that:

> "The pursuit of the "random path of the intelligence," we learned, was the real defection of man from his divine mission. To have "magic insight" was apparently *Hitler's idea of the goal of human progress. He himself felt that he already had the rudiments of this gift. He attributed to it his success and his future eminence*. A savant of Munich…had also written some curious stuff about the prehistoric world…about forms of perception and supernatural powers. *There was the eye of Cyclops, or median eye, the organ of magic perception of the Infinite, now reduced to a rudimentary pineal gland. Speculations of this sort fascinated Hitler*, and he would sometimes be entirely wrapped up in them. He saw his own remarkable career as a confirmation of hidden powers. He saw himself as chosen for superhuman tasks, as the prophet of the rebirth of man in a new form." *Hitler Speaks* (London, 1939), p. 240

According to Mosse in *The Crisis of German Ideology* (p. 76) and Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner's *Zwischen Rilke und Hitler-Alfred Schuler* (p. 338, 343, 1967), Hitler frequently visited the home of Hugo (a Munich publisher of the writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain) and Elsa Bruckmann (born Princess Cantacuzene of Romania) in 1922 and 1923, where Alfred Schuler, a disciple of Guido von List lectured.

The Thule founder and members were versed in esoteric philosophy and German mythology, and in *Bevor Hitler Kam* (Before Hitler Came, 1933), Thule founder Rudolf von Sebottendorf speaks of his Society's importance to the founding of the National Socialist German Worker's Party:

> "It was Thule people to whom Hitler first came and it was Thule people who first united themselves with Hitler. The armament of the coming Führer consisted, besides the Thule itself, of the German Workers' Society, founded in the Thule Society by brother Karl Harrer and the German-Socialist Party led by Hans Georg Grassinger, whose organ was the *Munchener Beobachter*, later the *Volkische Beobachter*. From these three sources Hitler created the National Socialist German Worker's Party." (see Rudolf von Sebottendorf, *Before Hitler Came*, Munich 1933:33-43; and George Franz, "*Munich: Birthplace and Center of the National Socialist German Workers' Party*," The Journal of Modern History 29 Dec. 1957: 325-29.

There is more to discover about the origins of the National Socialists. Politically, it existed two decades prior to Adolf Hitler and has been thoroughly documented.

THEOSOPHIST FRANZ HARTMANN'S SUPPORT OF GUIDO VON LIST

Franz Hartmann was a notable German Theosophist (and founder of *a* German Theosophical Society), who once worked under Helena Blavatsky in Adyar, and later foolishly supported Guido von List. Known for his

esoteric studies and biographies on Jakob Böhme and Paracelsus (a *Secret Doctrine Reference Series* book), Hartmann supported the Guido von List Society (*Guido-von-List-Gesellschaft*). Franz Hartmann, as detailed in Johannes Baltzli's "*Guido von List*" (Vienna, pp. 45-46, 1917), and Mosse's "*The Mystical Origins of National Socialism*" (pp. 85-87) believed, that the racial doctrine of Guido von List remarkably resembled Blavatsky's. Having demonstrated the dissimilarities, Franz Hartmann must've lost his mind.

Johannes Baltzli (the biographer of List), a Theosophist himself, was secretary of the Guido von List Society and edited the German Occult Monthly, PRANA, which was published by the Theosophical Publishing House (TPH).

The journal represented the power of the Sun, as the visible symbol of Deity, and contributors to PRANA included the Theosophists Franz Hartmann, C.W. Leadbeater, and Guido von List himself. Yet, having gone over the differences, this is as similar to likening and equating C.W. Leadbeater, Jinarajadasa, Steiner, and Annie Besant's reconfigured notions and classification with the *original* Theosophical system. We have proven above however, the incompatibility and fundamental differences of List's notions and Blavatsky's.

AGAINST REX CURRY'S ANTI-SOCIALIST CONSPIRACY ABOUT THEOSOPHY, THE BELLAMYS AND AMERICA

A researcher, Rex Curry, suspicious that even Blavatsky's *Key of Theosophy* was readied to be translated into the German language, wrote a ridiculous morass of lies, such as this:

> "*The Bellamys and Blavatsky saw in their movements a practical means to further their "ideal of universal brotherhood*." (...) *The political product was socialism* and self-sacrifice to government by calling it the "greater good."

> *There was a white supremacist ideology in it*, with talk of root races, claiming that the fifth of which, the Aryans, were vastly more "evolved" than the lower races. *Blavatsky openly referred to negros and Indians and "half-human mongrels," though her followers excuse this by claiming that she believed white people were also once black skinned*, and because of their personal drive to advance spiritually they were reincarnated as white people." (Rex Curry, Madame Blavatsky and Edward Bellamy, retrieved from http://rexcurry.net/theosophy-madame-blavatsky-theosophical-society.html)[1]

1 Claims assessed: a. The Bellamys and Blavatsky saw in their movements a practical means to further their "ideal of universal brotherhood." So what? The concept of universal sister-brotherhood is central to the fundamentals of the Occult Philosophy, but namely in this context Vedic and Buddhist tradition; b. "The political product was socialism." *False*, although Edward Bellamy was a socialist. c. "There was a white supremacist ideology in it." *False*. d. Lastly, she never claimed white people were once black-skinned. That is the most bastardized distortion of the "Black with Sin" allegory discussing the fable of Prometheus, which is *not* a reference to physical "black skin." e. Blavatsky does not propagate a racial doctrine of "Aryan (Ario-German) superiority."

THE RACIAL DUALISM OF LIEBENFELS AND HIS IRRATIONAL HATRED OF JEWS

Lanz von Liebenfels, the author of *Theozoologie* (1904) propagated a mystical racial dualism, concerning the origin of the Jew and Aryan, whose ideas crossed over into the *Ostara* magazine. Liebenfels wrote of the Jews, that the "Aryan hero is on this planet the most complete incarnation of God and of the Spirit." Jews were considered "lower, inferior races," characterized as "animal-men" and beasts who must someday be eliminated by genetic selection, sterilization, deportations, forced labor, and "direct liquidation." The elimination of the

"animal-man" — sharing sentiment with Hitler's later *Mein Kampf* — for Liebenfels made possible the need for the coming of the "higher new man." This is not an idea in agreement with Theosophy.

Liebenfels' *Ariosophy* was based on the concept of "Ario-Germans," and the presumption of their superiority. In 1907 on the Danube, he established his first New Templars castle in the Burg Werfenstein, proudly flying a swastika flag over it. Wilfried Daim in *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab* recounts, that Liebenfels, by 1920 had established three more castles for his Templar movement, and served as board of directors of the Guido von List Society. Michael Robert Marrus in *Origins of the Holocaust* quotes respectable Scottish historian James Webb in *The Occult Establishment*, that Liebenfels said in Vienna, 1925, he considered the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States apart of his international Ariosophical movement. To any honest researcher, knowledgeable of this history and of the Theosophical Movement, the two movements are completely opposite.

Liebenfels supposedly honored the work of Blavatsky amid the booming scientific era. Like the uncorroborated hearsay that Hitler kept a copy of *The Secret Doctrine* by his bedside, a friend of Liebenfels claimed that Liebenfels said he had *direct* contact with H.P. Blavatsky. This is used by some to develop a bogus hypothesis that Blavatsky was plotting to establish these movements, *even though her own writings speak against* beliefs fundamental to the Austrio-German Ariosophists. She explicitly warns about such groups she was monitoring in her time (read Pseudo-Theosophy and Pseudo-Messiahs: Imitations of Theosophy). It is said that she even predicted the World War and a figure, that can be none other more fitting of the description than Adolf Hitler (Helena Blavatsky predicts Europe Catastrophe, World War and Adolf Hitler).

CONCLUSION

Adolf Hitler's views would seem to only *superficially* match a statement made in *The Mahatma Letters*, for example:

> "The racial question gives the key not only to world history, but to all human culture."
>
> ADOLF HITLER, MEIN KAMPF, TRANS. RALPH MANHEIM (BOSTON, 1943), P. 339

K.H. in context speaks of the theories of Biblical anthropology and chronologies at the time, which he rejects, stating:

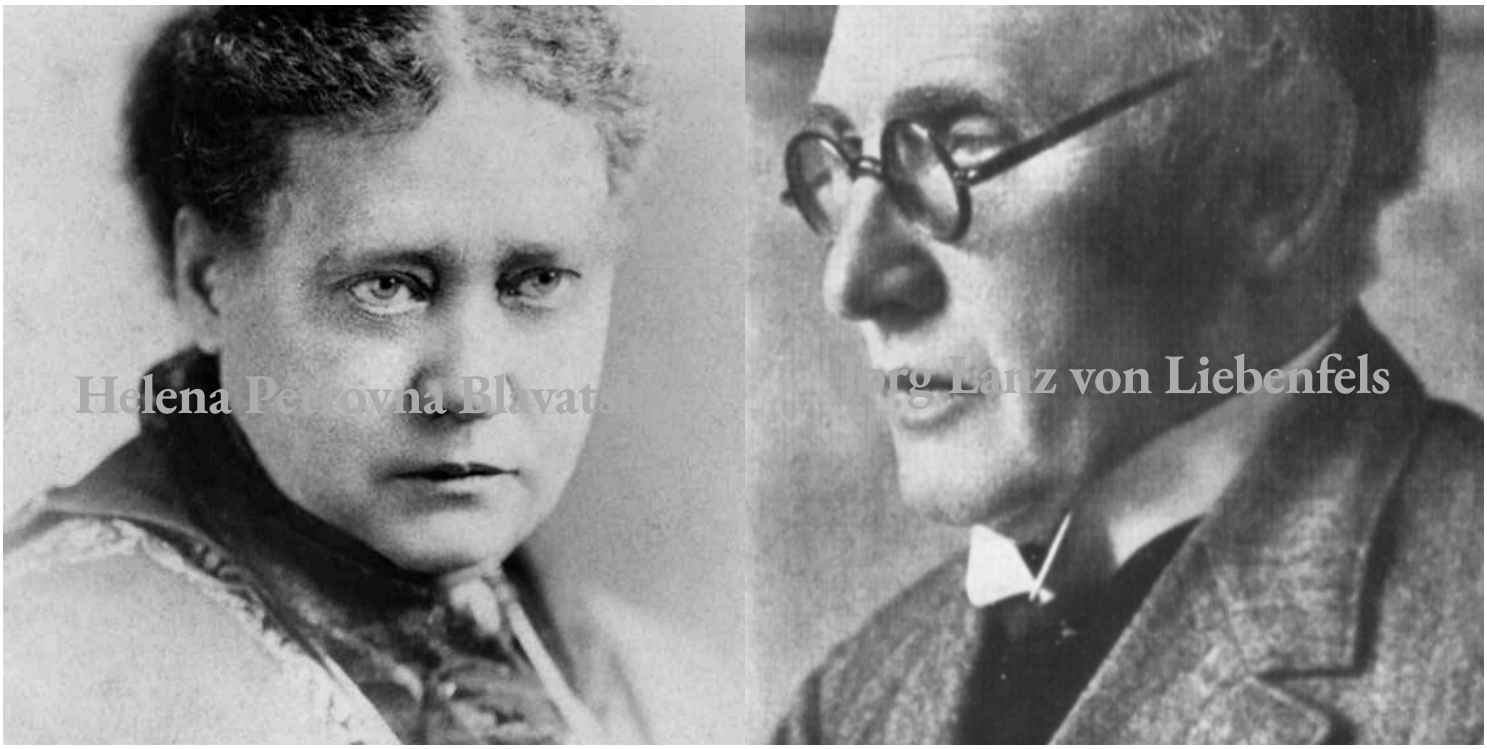
> "Our doctrine treats anthropology as an absurd empty dream of the religionists and confines itself to ethnology."
>
> THE MAHATMA LETTER NO. 14, July 9, 1882

The racial and Jewish question of the National Socialists is a different conversation from the one K.H. is having in critiquing the use of Biblical chronology in dating the age of the Earth.

In the end, the doctrines, ethics and theories between Blavatsky and List, Liebenfels and Hitler prove to be *entirely* dissimilar, and counter to each other.

> "Historians and journalists today increasingly speak of occultist and pagan influences on Adolf Hitler. The subject is a favorite of cable-television documentaries. It has even spawned a subgenre of historical literature, ranging from speculative to serious, that casts the Third Reich as an occult empire.
>
> To consider this contentious issue requires taking a road that briefly leads us away from America before returning to it. Europe in the early twentieth century was a hothouse of ideologies and doctrines – spiritual,

> scientific, and political – and these ideas often crisscrossed among themselves. Occult ideas sometimes spilled into social movements, both fascistic and democratic."
>
> MITCH HOROWITZ, FASCISM AND THE OCCULT: IS THERE A CONNECTION



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One response to "Occult Interests and Theosophy in Germany (1880s-1930s): Blavatsky vs. Hitler, List and Liebenfels on Race"

Michael
August 12, 2022

After a long and circuitous route, finally commenting on this post. Like I said when you first wrote and posted, you're closer to a definitive account of this history—seen from a more balanced perspective—than most academic scholarship.

It's great you've reached into the Mahatma Letters and Sinnett's writing to make these points. Not even the best academic scholarship has done this so far. As much as Goodrich-Clarke does a solid job at analysis, it's clear his understanding of actual *Theosophy* is not very good and is a weakness of his scholarship. It's also important to realize that part of Goodrich-Clarke's goal was trying to exonerate "respectable" Western philosophy from the taint of Nazism: Nietzsche, Hegel, etc. Pointing towards Nietzsche and Wagner had been the direction of scholarship around excavating the roots of Nazism prior to Mosse and others. Mosse is outright hostile towards Blavatsky though; there's a degree of scapegoating in all of this.

There's a couple of points that are catching my attention at the moment:
1 – Why is Lanz-Liebenfels so rabidly racist? He's clearly playing to an audience (shades of Alex Jones and Info Wars here) but I've never seen this background well investigated.
2 – More should be made of Lanz-Liebenfels Christianity. Theozoology is pure Christian cryptozoology not Blavatskian Theosophy. The history of Germanic Christian anti-Judiasm is a thousand years old and is

consistently absent in the "occult Nazism" scholarship and conspiracy theories.
3 – Lanz-Liebenfels is claimed to have derived "racial" theories from Blavatsky but this is never detailed in the scholarship only stated as a fact. Lanz-Liebenfels' ideas seem even more at home and imitative of the scientific racism of Darwinists like Haeckel but this much more mainstream connection is never noted. The concept of half-animal and lesser humans is popular and widely in circulation long before The Secret Doctrine; if anything, Blavatsky pushes back on this by asserting and emphasizing the spiritual equality of humanity.
4 – A far more obvious and existing source of "god-informed men and lower human creatures" is gnosticism/Manicheanism: the elect and sinners, etc.
5 – I've been wondering recently how much the 1918 pandemic amplified all this concern of purity and fears of contamination: lingering trauma from lived experience. If I hadn't just lived through a pandemic, I would have never been aware of this possible connection.

Good work!

Reply

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